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## ChopChop E-Newsletter Focuses on Local Agriculture



Red Fire Farm, a local farm in Granby, Massachusetts, is featured in the February [ChopChop](#) newsletter launched as part of a new collaboration between MDAR and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to promote healthy, sustainable foods to Bay State families. Sweet potatoes are February's highlighted vegetable – one of 300 varieties of crops grown by the 115-acre certified-organic vegetable farm.

The collaboration was announced by Governor Deval Patrick at the beginning of the year. The new colorful two-page newsletter features fun, easy-to-prepare and healthy recipes (featuring locally –grown produce) which parents and children can make together. Be sure to check out ChopChop each month at [www.mass.gov/massinmotion/chopchop](http://www.mass.gov/massinmotion/chopchop).

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## Delivering Results: Implementing Performance Management in Massachusetts

Three MDAR representatives - Commissioner Scott Soares, General Counsel Bob Ritchie, and Chief of Staff Anna Waclawiczek - attended a one-day conference held at the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management focused on optimizing performance management in government and non-profits. As part of the Patrick/Murray Administration's goal to improve government accountability, efforts are underway to pursue reforms to improve the way government operates and delivers services. The purpose of the conference was to introduce stakeholders to the use of performance management to drive success.



The Patrick-Murray Administration has initiated a statewide performance management program called MassGOALS (Massachusetts Government Outcomes to Achieve Long-Term Success) as a tool to align operations and resources around key priorities and to track the progress of executive departments in achieving outcomes. Building on recent successes, including an ARRA grant to state agencies to jumpstart a dedicated program, Governor Patrick proposed and the legislature supported the establishment the Office of Commonwealth Performance, Accountability and Transparency (CPAT). Successes to date include enhanced coordination of federal grants; public engagement and transparency enhancements e.g. the launch of the State's [Open Checkbook](#) website; program integrity (a task force on fraud, waste, and abuse); and caseload and economic forecasting.



Guest speakers and presenters included keynote speaker Governor Deval Patrick, Shelly Metzenbaum, PhD, performance & personnel management, White House Office, UMass faculty, Secretaries Jay Gonzalez, JudyAnn Bigby, Gregory Bialecki, Richard Sullivan, Paul Reville, Mary Beth Heffernan, Joanne Goldstein, and Richard Davey, Assistant Commissioner Celia Blue, Senate President Therese Murray, state auditor Suzanne Bump, and other state representatives.

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## Biomass Energy Grants for Massachusetts Facilities

The US Forest Service, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, is offering preliminary biomass energy feasibility studies for select facilities in Massachusetts under its Woody Energy Utilization Support Program. The goal of the program is to promote the Forest Service's Northeast Area Strategic Plan objective on the sustainable use of forest resources to provide efficient use of renewable energy resources and accomplish greenhouse gas reduction. This program is intended to jump start the evaluation, and hopefully the adoption of, appropriate biomass energy projects in Massachusetts. As part of this effort, the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) is subsidizing the full cost of preliminary biomass feasibility studies for select facilities in Massachusetts.

For an application and more information:

Samantha Dunn  
Yellow Wood Associates  
228 North Main Street  
St. Albans, VT 05478  
Fax: 802-524-6643 Phone: 802-524-6141  
[Samantha@yellowwood.org](mailto:Samantha@yellowwood.org)

Applications will be received until April 1, 2012 and at that time ranked to determine the best sites to perform the pre-feasibility studies. The number of studies done will be based on time and money available at that point.

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## USDA Invites Minority Producers to Join USDA Minority Farm Register

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) invites minority farmers and ranchers across the nation to voluntarily join the USDA Minority Farm Register to receive information and opportunities from USDA agencies.

"The new Minority Farm Register is an outreach tool to reach underserved farmers and ranchers who are not currently enrolled in USDA loan, farm or conservation programs," said Ted C. Smiarowski Jr., Hampshire/Hampden County FSA County Executive Director. "The Register is a shared outreach list that will help USDA, community-based organizations and minority-serving educational institutions to communicate with minority farmers and ranchers."

By joining the Register, minority producers may receive outreach materials, newsletters, and program announcements from USDA agencies. They may also receive information and assistance from other USDA-approved outreach partners, such as community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and minority-serving educational institutions. USDA will carefully control access to and use of the Register.

Individuals wishing to join the Register must sign and date a form that provides their name and address. Providing phone numbers, e-mail address, race, ethnicity, gender and farm or ranch location will be voluntary, although the additional information increases the producer's opportunities for receiving timely assistance.

The Register pamphlet with the registration form is available at the Hampshire/Hampden County USDA Service Center or from approved USDA outreach partners. Completed forms may be mailed to: USDA Minority Farm Register, USDA Stop Code 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250. FSA and USDA's Office of Advocacy and Outreach are jointly administering the Register. Registration forms are available in Spanish (AD-2035SP) and English (AD-2035) on the FSA web site ([www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)) under "Forms".

An individual may remove his or her name from the Register by writing to the Minority Farm Register, USDA Stop Code 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250. For more information, please contact the Farm Service Agency, STOP 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0503 (Call 1-866-538-2610; Fax: 1-866-302-1760; E-mail: [MSDA@USDA.gov](mailto:MSDA@USDA.gov)).



MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at [mass.gov/agr](http://mass.gov/agr), and/or follow at [twitter.com/agcommishsoares](https://twitter.com/agcommishsoares). For our ongoing list of events and workshops visit and bookmark: [www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming\\_up.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming_up.htm).